

Person Centred Approaches in Transition Planning

This paper looks at what a person centred approach might look like for a disabled young person during the transition to adulthood. It sets out what personalisation and person centred approaches are, looks at practice development and sets out guidance which supports this way of working.

Introduction

Personalisation and person centred approaches for disabled young people in transition

For most young people being able to choose what they want to do when they finish school is an automatic assumption. Young people are offered advice and support about options available to them from families and professionals, but ultimately the decision is up to them. For disabled young people, however, this is not always the expectation. Disabled young people have historically had decisions made about their futures without being asked what it is they want to do, or with such limited choice available that they are simply expected to use existing support which offers limited options.

The move towards personalisation could have a significant impact on the lives of disabled young people. Using the range of support which sits under the 'personalisation' term, should provide all disabled people with the opportunity to live lives as citizens with the same rights as others.

Person centred approaches play a vital role in progressing the wider personalisation movement. Personalised support in the form of self directed mechanisms such as individual budgets, personal budgets and direct payments, should enable the service user to have choice and control over how they receive the support they need to lead the lives they want. Accessible information and advocacy services also enable the service user to make clear choices and make sure their voice is heard. Person centred approaches complement

these measures by informing organisational culture and suggest ways of carrying out existing processes in a way that is centred on the person or people they are intended to support. Alongside planning with individuals, such as young people in transition, person centred approaches should also inform strategic planning and commissioning to ensure appropriate and adequate development of services and the wider market place.

Defining person centred approaches

Person centred approaches are a range of tools and organisational attitudes that have been developed over several decades to offer a more personalised and outcomes-focused way of meeting disabled people's additional support needs. Person centred planning is a popular example of such a tool, which evolved from a number of similar methods pioneered from the 1970s onwards to help people with learning disabilities leave institutions and develop skills to become empowered citizens. With support through national policy initiatives over the past ten years across England this has been taken forward in a variety of ways, facilitating the development of more effective ways of working.

[Guidance](#) issued alongside the 2001 Valuing People white paper defines person centred approaches as:

"...ways of commissioning, providing and organising services rooted in listening to what people want, to help them live in their communities as they choose.

These approaches work to use resources flexibly, designed around what is important to a person from their own perspective and work to remove any cultural and organisational barriers to this. People are not simply placed in pre-existing services and expected to adjust, rather the service strives to adjust to the person. Person centred approaches look to mainstream services and community resources for assistance and do not limit themselves to what is available within specialist... services. They strive to build a person centred organisational culture."

Using person centred approaches in the formal transition process

Case Study

Preparing for transition reviews in Suffolk

In preparation for the Year 9 transition review, all young people transferring to KS 4 are encouraged and supported to make a DVD that tells their story. The DVD shows who the young person is, what they like/dislike, what their hopes and aspirations are. The DVD is shown at the start of the Year 9 review and gives the professionals (Connexions PAs, Adult Services etc), often unknown to the young person and their family, valuable information about the young person.

The case study on person centred planning is available from the [Transition Support Programme website](#).

Ensuring young people and their families are right at the heart of the planning process

To ensure the formal transition process supports all disabled young people to reach their goals it is vital that young people and their families are right at the heart of the planning process. A clear understanding of person centred approaches will help all those working to support disabled young people to make sure this happens:

- Young people have choice and control over all aspects of their lives;

- Personalisation supports the citizenship model of inclusion;
- Young people are supported to have greater expectations;
- Services are responsive to the needs and aspirations of young people;
- Local opportunities are developed based on the needs, talents and aspirations of young people;
- Young people are able to access equal opportunities to their peers;
- Personalisation supports a seamless transition process for young people.

Training and resources

Making sure that staff across all agencies have an understanding of using a person centred approach and supporting them to work in this way is essential to the success of effectively supporting young people. Whilst there is no definitive model to follow, there is a whole range of training and tools available to support local areas to find the right model for them.

Training is available from a range of providers covering person centred approaches. The main focus of this is commonly around the facilitation of Year 9 person centred transition reviews. There are a great many resources available, which may be used to support disabled young people, their families and professionals working with them.

Key topics that these can cover include:

- Working with young people to prepare for their transition review meeting;
- Making sure the young person's views are included in the transition review and subsequent plan;
- Looking at the best way to conduct the review to meet the young persons needs;
- Developing a full plan which includes not only basic planning but sets out how those around

them will support individual young people to reach their goals;

- Gathering information on young people's requirements and making sure this informs the commission process across agencies.

Embedding person centred approaches locally

Embedding effective and sustainable person centred approaches will involve being flexible and:

- Having a clear strategy of how person centred approaches can be implemented creatively in the local environment while maintaining awareness and commitment to core principles;
- Adjusting ways of working and training to support the development of a model which will best support local need;
- Use of tools to allow all disabled young people to benefit from a person centred approach. This will mean accommodating and supporting the range of methods of communication used by young people with various impairments.

Local areas may benefit from the skills of a strong person centred coordinator, facilitator or team confident in supporting the development of skills amongst the workforce, and ensuring services are using person centred tools and processes in a way that works well for all concerned.

Person centred approaches to working will flourish in an environment where the skill base at an operational level is strong and creative, but this should be underpinned by a commitment to progressing the work at a strategic level, and engagement at all levels should be multi agency.

Tools should be developed locally to ensure there is a direct pathway for information gathered through person centred work to be fed into the timely development of appropriate services for young people with disabilities. This will ensure that person centred plans are implemented, making this approach to working more about positive outcomes, rather than the process itself. What remains key in person centred approaches is the essential values and beliefs that disabled young people have the same rights and therefore should be given the same opportunities as their non-disabled peers.

Preparation for the review process

The Year 9 transition review and subsequent reviews play an important part in the transition planning process for disabled young people. However, without support prior to the review, the potential of this opportunity may be lost. Young people and their families need support to understand the significance and importance of the Year 9 review, and to think about what they might want to say at the review. Young people should be encouraged to think about who is important to them and should therefore be invited to attend.

A number of schools are using person centred approaches as part of the curriculum to support disabled young people outside of the review process to think about their future and what hopes they have.

Provision of information

The provision of information is crucial to making sure disabled young people get the right support to achieve what they set out to in adult life. Information empowers young people and their families to make informed choices. Information should be delivered in a way that supports disabled young people's aspirations to lead ordinary lives and should cover both the transition process and the options available to the young person.

Information should be readily available and accessible to a wide audience. Information may be presented in a variety of formats, for example:-

- *Written Information*

A Transition Information Pack should contain useful information for disabled young people in the transition process. It may include a copy of the Transition Pathway which should reflect aspects of personalisation and be updated as personalisation grows and develops.

- *Visual Information*

Many areas are now developing transition information either in a website or on DVD. Multimedia formats have presented the opportunity to provide information in a new

and innovative way, which have the potential to reach more disabled young people.

- *Information Events*

Meeting with groups of young people and/or their families is often an effective way of sharing information. Holding information fairs or workshop sessions gives young people and their families not only the chance to develop a better understanding, but also to ask questions as they arrive.

It is also important to remember the need to ensure all information is accessible to disabled young people and families from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities.

Information available should be kept up to date, to ensure it is accurate for young people and their families. It is also important that professionals that may be asked to provide information have a common understanding of the personalisation agenda, and are able to source the information that families are requesting in an efficient and consistent way.

Policy and guidance

This section gives a brief summary of guidance documents that feed into the use of person centred approaches during the statutory transition process, including transition planning in health and for Learning Difficulty Assessments. Documents on the Valuing People agenda, which relates to people with learning disabilities, are also included.

Transition Reviews

Local authorities and most heads of schools independent from local authority control (duties of the heads of Academies, for example, will be set out in their Funding Agreement and processes for redress and enforcement will differ from those for maintained schools) must have regard to the [SEN code of practice](#). It is statutory guidance issued under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and also gives guidance on provision for children and young people with statements of special

educational needs, as covered by the Education Act 1996.

The code of practice sets out the requirement to review statements of special educational needs, including at the Year 9 and subsequent transition reviews.

It provides guidance on how such reviews should be conducted. Explanation of these principles is given in section 10 of the SEN toolkit. The principles can be seen as broadly person centred in nature and comparable to the key features of person centred planning, as set out in the 2002 guidance, *Planning With People*.

Below is the relevant excerpt from the code of practice with explanations added from the toolkit:

Everyone involved, whatever methods or tools are used, should ensure that the transition planning process is:

Participative – [involving the young person in a meaningful way because their views and aspirations are central to the process]

Holistic – [a young person's aspirations and needs will touch on every aspect of their future lives and hence there must be an holistic approach to planning and providing support]

Supportive – [the main purpose of the statutory transition and annual review processes is to support young people, their parents and the professionals who work with them in the process of making decisions about the next stage of their lives]

Evolving – [the Year 9 review and the leaving school stages are just steps in the transition of young people towards adulthood. They are part of a much longer and gradually evolving process]

Inclusive – [as part of becoming fully inclusive, schools will need to ensure that their careers education and guidance programmes form a part of the transition planning process and meet the requirements of all pupils]

Collaborative – [effective transition planning requires teaching staff, parents and professionals from other agencies to work closely together]

The SEN code of practice also gives further information about transition reviews, including who should attend. Section 4 of the SEN toolkit provides useful information on engaging pupils in making decisions.

The SEN Code of Practice can be downloaded from the teachernet website www.teachernet.gov.uk.

National Service Framework Standard 8

The [National Service Framework for children, young people and maternity services](#) (Department of Health, 2004) sets out the standards for health and social care for children and young people that the government expects to become entrenched over the ten years to 2014. Standard 8 of the NSF covers disabled children and young people and those with complex health needs.

The aspirations in NSF Standard 8 include the following:

“Local Authorities, Primary Care Trusts and NHS Trusts ensure that:

Transition planning has as its main focus the fulfilment of the hopes, dreams and potential of the disabled young person, in particular to maximise education, training and employment opportunities, to enjoy social relationships and to live independently. Transition plans take a person-centred planning approach, as described in Towards Person-Centred Approaches - guidance, and which is consistent with the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice.”

The National Service Framework can be downloaded from the Department of Health website www.dh.gov.uk.

A transition guide for all services

[A transition guide for all services](#) produced by the Council for Disabled Children and partners for the Department of Health and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007) brings together information about legal duties and good practice guidance for supporting all areas of a disabled young person’s transition to adulthood.

It suggests that the organisation of and preparation for transition review meetings should

be centred to enable young people to fully participate in the review process.

Taking a person centred approach to review meetings is suggested as a way for professionals to support disabled young people to express what they would like to happen in their future. This is said to involve not only the young person being invited to the meeting, but their plans, ambitions and worries forming the focal point of it.

The transition guide also states that:

“As a result of the transition review meeting in Year 9, actions should be agreed between the young person, their family, the school and other relevant agencies. On the basis of this, the head teacher has responsibility for drawing up a plan that clearly defines who is responsible for what and when actions should be taken. Currently, the Connexions service has a responsibility for overseeing the delivery of this transition plan. This plan must be reviewed and updated each year, in consultation with the disabled young person and their family.”

This guide can be downloaded from the Transition Information Network website www.transitioninfonet.org.uk.

Advice for using person centred thinking, planning and reviews in schools and transition

This [good practice guidance](#) (Department of Health, 2010), produced to support the implementation of *Valuing People* and *Valuing People Now* covers a range of key topics that will need to be considered for any person centred planning process to have a real impact for disabled young people. Such topics include how a person centred review can be carried out to how this type of planning can support decisions around the use of direct payments and moving towards employment.

It also discusses how person centred approaches can feed into strategic planning for schools and local authorities.

It gives an outline description of a person centred annual review as follows:

“Person-centred reviews can generate information (one-page profiles) and create action plans that improve young people’s lives, as well as meeting statutory requirements. It is effectively directed by the young person and addresses the issues that matter most to them, because it is based on what they say is important to them; it shows what good support looks like and discovers what is working and not working.”

This guidance was published as part of [Personalisation through person centred planning](#)

This publication can be downloaded from the Department of Health website www.dh.gov.uk.

Learning Difficulty Assessments

[Supporting young people with learning difficulties to participate and progress – incorporating guidance on Learning Difficulty Assessments](#)

(Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2010) is statutory guidance for the assessment of the needs of young people with learning difficulties as they move into further education.

The guidance outlines a holistic and person-centred process. It states:

“Learning Difficulty Assessments should have a person centred approach focusing on Progression.”

In order to be person centred, a learning difficulty assessment should build on the transition review process. Hence the guidance also states:

“The Learning Difficulty Assessment should be the culmination of an on-going process of assessment and reviews. The Learning Difficulty Assessment is designed to update, add to and build on previous assessments and interventions taking account of changing needs and circumstances – it should not duplicate them or be viewed as a separate, one-off event.”

This publication can be downloaded from the Department for Education website www.education.gov.uk.

Transition Planning in Health

[Transition: Moving on Well](#) (Department of Health, 2008) is a good practice guide for health professionals and their partners on transition planning for young people with complex health needs or a disability. As well as providing more in-depth good practice guidance, Moving on Well lists 13 key principles of health transition planning. The first of these key principles is:

“Planning is person centred and needs focused, identifying the hopes, aspirations and goals of the young person who plays an active part in decisions about their future.”

Joining planning work together is also a key topic of this guidance:

“Throughout the transition process, all agencies have a responsibility to work together. Health professionals, school staff, the Connexions personal adviser and the transition social worker need to work in partnership with the young person and family to agree how they prepare for the process of transition and how the young person will be supported to have a lead voice in planning and reviews.”

See also: [Health Action Planning and Health Facilitation for people with learning disabilities: good practice guidance](#) (Department of Health, 2009)

These resources can be downloaded from the Department of Health website www.dh.gov.uk.

Valuing People and Valuing People Now

[Valuing People](#) (Department of Health, 2001) is a white paper that sets out the government’s strategy for improving services for people with learning disabilities with emphasis on better coordination of services and people with learning disabilities having more choice and control over their lives. The vision described is intended to be based on four key principles of Rights, Independence, Choice and Inclusion.

Valuing People encouraged the use of person centred approaches, including person centred planning, to help achieve this vision, setting priorities up to 2007.

“A person-centred approach will be essential to deliver real change in the lives for people with learning difficulties. Person-centred planning provides a single, multi-agency mechanism for achieving this.”

Young people with learning disabilities were identified as one of the first groups to which government wished the use of person centred planning to be rolled out to.

“Local agencies will be expected to have introduced person-centred planning for all young people moving from children’s to adult’s services by 2003.”

Planning With People: Moving Towards Person Centred Approaches

This guidance (Department of Health, 2002) was issued to assist the implementation of Valuing People. There are actually two guidance documents, one for the [learning disability partnership boards](#) set up to oversee the proposed reforms and one for [implementation groups](#). As well as describing and encouraging the wider use of person centred approaches, these documents also give important advice on using person centred planning:

“Person centred planning is a process for continual listening and learning, focussing on what is important to someone now and in the future, and acting upon this in alliance with their family and friends.

This listening is used to understand a person’s capabilities and choices. Person-centred planning is the basis for problem solving and negotiation to mobilize the necessary resources to pursue a person’s aspirations. These resources may be obtained from someone’s own network, service providers or from non-specialist and non-service sources.”

The guidance also lists 5 key features of person centred planning, which are explained in more detail in the document for implementation groups.

1. The person is at the centre;
2. Family members and friends are full partners;
3. Person centred planning reflects the person’s capacities, what is important to the person

(now and for their future) and specifies the support they require to make a valued contribution to their community;

4. Person centred planning builds a shared commitment to action that will uphold the person’s rights;
5. Person centred planning leads to continual listening, learning and action, and helps the person to get what they want out of life.

Although this guidance focuses on the effective use of person centred planning, it makes clear the need to keep an open mind around the use of this particular tool and to keep it in the context of broader development of person centred approaches and improved outcomes.

“There are different styles of person centred planning... Styles can be used to complement one another. Similarly, ideas about person centred planning continue to evolve. There must be space for innovation and development in policy and practice.”

“Person centred planning is not... an end in itself. The aim is for people to have better lives which reflect their own aspirations. For some people person centred planning can be a powerful instrument to achieve the life they want to lead. Many people, however, will make changes without person centred planning –supported by families, allies and creative service staff.”

These resources can be downloaded from the Department of Health website www.dh.gov.uk.

Personalisation through Person-Centred Planning

This joint [good practice guidance](#) published by the Putting People First and Valuing People Now teams (Department of Health, 2010) was developed to help local areas understand how person centred planning can help to deliver more personalised services for a range of service users. It is intended support the renewed drive to roll out person centred approaches outlined by the [Valuing People Now](#) strategy in 2009.

The guidance explains how person centred plans can be produced using a variety of methods, what has been found to help and hinder the implementation of person centred planning locally and the progression of policies covering person centred planning from the Department of Health.

[Advice for using person-centred thinking, planning and reviews in schools and transition](#) was published as part of this guidance as were three other supporting documents:

[Advice for professionals](#)

[Advice for providers](#)

[Advice for commissioners](#)

These resources can be downloaded from the Department of Health website www.dh.gov.uk.

Further resources

Commissioning Support Programme

The Commissioning Support Programme resource bank hosts a range of documents covering topics including good practice in more joined up and person centred commissioning. www.commissioningsupport.org.uk

Getting a Life

Getting a life is a project supporting the development of good practice in supporting young people with severe learning disabilities into paid employment. www.gettingalife.org.uk

Transition Information Network

This is a network for parents, carers, disabled young people and people who work with and for disabled young people in transition to adulthood. www.transitionfonetwork.org.uk

Transition Support Programme

Find out more about the Aiming High for Disabled Children Transition Support Programme and download case studies on how local areas are embedding more person centred approaches

www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk

Valuing People

This website contains resources produced by the Valuing People Support Team and partners as well as key guidance on taking forward the Valuing People agenda for people with learning disabilities.

www.valuingpeople.gov.uk

National Transition Support Team (NTST)

NTST is working alongside the National Strategies and the Child Health and Maternity Partnership to coordinate the delivery of the Transition Support Programme.

NTST is based at the Council for Disabled Children (CDC), the umbrella body for the disabled children's sector in England. CDC is hosted by NCB. www.ncb.org.uk/cdc

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